

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed February 3, 2003, the Examiner objected to the drawings. Appropriate correction is provided herewith as set forth in detail in the Remarks below.

The Examiner has rejected claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Claim 15 has been cancelled.

The Examiner appears to have rejected claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Pintsov (US Patent No. 5,586,036) in view of USPS "3 Special Services" and PS Form 2865. Applicant believes that the Examiner meant to reject claims 1-22 and not just claim 1 as stated in the first line of Paragraph 5 of the Office Action. Claims 1-15 have been cancelled. Applicant has amended the remaining independent claim to overcome these rejections.

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 have been cancelled. Claims 23-36 have been added. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the original claims and other claims in this application and in other applications. Claims 16-36 are pending in the subject application.

In the Office Action mailed February 3, 2003, the Examiner objected to the drawings because descriptive labels, other than numerical are needed for Figure 2. The drawings have been amended as follows:

- a) In Fig. 2, descriptive labels have been added.
- b) In Fig. 3, "Mail Item File" block has been relabeled "190" and the specification has been amended accordingly.

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Claim 15 has been cancelled.

The Examiner appears to have rejected claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Pintsov (US Patent No. 5,586,036) in view of USPS "3 Special Services" and PS Form 2865. Applicant believes that the Examiner meant to reject claims 1-22 and not just claim 1 as stated in the first line of Paragraph 5 of the Office Action. Applicant has cancelled claims 1-15 and amended the remaining independent claim 16 to overcome these rejections. Claims 23-36 have been added to more clearly articulate the present invention.

The present invention is directed to a system and method for providing a value-added service associated with the delivery of a mailpiece when a plurality of postal authorities are involved in the handling of the mailpiece. The value added service is, for example, a confirmation to the originator of a mailpiece that the mailpiece has been delivered to a recipient. The confirmation may include a scanned image of the mailpiece and an image of the recipient's signature indicating receipt of the mailpiece.

The present invention provides a system and method to overcome the difficulties of performing value-added services requested by an original mailer in an international postal system, without revealing the original mailer's identity other than to an originating postal authority, i.e., the first postal authority to handle a mailpiece. By including an electronic address, such as an e-mail address, of the originating postal authority on the mailpiece, the present invention provides a method and system for the originating postal authority to receive a return message from a subsequent handling postal authority related to the requested value-added service. This information is then electronically delivered to the original mailer. Thus, the originating postal authority maintains the confidentiality of its customer database in addition to its competitive edge in the marketplace. The savings may also be passed along to the mailer. This invention integrates traditional hard copy and electronic communication into one effective communication system that takes advantage of beneficial features of both traditional mail and electronic mail, while offering end users (i.e., the rate-paying public) a broader selection of communication services.

The references cited in the rejection, neither alone or in combination disclose nor suggest the claimed invention. The Examiner acknowledges that Pintsov ('036) does not teach the use of his system for international purposes. The Examiner states that the USPS has a relationship with many countries wherein value-added services are performed. The Examiner relies on PS Form 2865, the value-added services receipt between the USPS and other countries that has been used since at least March of 1985, to reject the claims of the present application.

Applicant has amended the claims to more clearly recite the present invention to show that the invention relates to preventing subsequent postal authorities from having access to a mailer's electronic address, whereby the subsequent postal authority would be able to communicate directly with the mailer and bypass the originating postal authority in the future. The use of PS Form 2865 and current relationship between the USPS and international posts

does not contemplate such a scenario and therefore cannot anticipate or suggest the present invention.

Claim 16 has been amended to make it clear that it is the electronic address of the mailer that is kept from the subsequent handling post.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application, as amended is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested. If any unresolved issues remain, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned attorney at (203) 924-3217 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully Submitted,



Charles R. Malandra, Jr.
Reg. No. 31,038
Attorney of Record
Telephone (203) 924-3217

PITNEY BOWES INC.
Intellectual Property and
Technology Law Department
35 Waterview Drive
P.O. Box 3000
Shelton, CT 06484-8000

CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Fax No. (703) 305-7687 on June 3, 2003.

Charles R. Malandra, Jr.
Name of Registered Rep.



Signature

June 3, 2003
Date